

*Pirke Aboth* is generally recognized to be one of the most important Mishnic treatises. In our own country we have the very careful edition by C. Taylor (*Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*). Professor Strack, who published an edition of it as long ago as 1882, has now issued a third edition, improved in many ways. For exercise in reading Hebrew it will be found of much use, the text being pointed, and notes explaining all peculiarities, especially differences from the Hebrew of the O.T., being added. *Yoma*, *Aboda zara*, and *Shabbath* have also been published by Dr. Strack, who hopes also to issue annotated texts of *Berakhoth* and *Pesachim*. The full title of the work before us is *Die Sprüche der Väter, herausgegeben und erklärt*, von Professor H. L. Strack. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1901. Price M.1.20.

A mere notice of their appearance will suffice for H. Winckler's *Himmels- und Weltenbild der Babylonier, als Grundlage der Weltanschauung*

und *Mythologie aller Völker*, and A. Wiedemann's *Die Unterhaltungslitteratur der alten Ägypter*. Both these belong to the admirable series 'Der alte Orient' (published by J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig), of which we have frequently spoken in terms of the highest commendation. Each issue of the series costs only 60 pfennigs, and in every instance is the work of an expert.

The Song of Deborah has a special interest for the O.T. student, on account of its undoubted antiquity and the light it casts upon the early tribal history of Israel. We have much pleasure in commending Professor C. Bruston's *Le Cantique de Debora* (Montauban, Librairie Laforgue) as a tractate that contains much valuable material both for the text and the exegesis of the Song. Professor Bruston argues forcibly in favour of the author (who can be easily shown not to be Deborah) having belonged to the tribe of Naphtali, and having thus been a compatriot of Barak.

## The Marvels of the Day of Pentecost.

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WHATEVER diversity of opinion there may be regarding the narrative in Acts 2, on one point there must be absolute unanimity—that something happened on that Day of Pentecost which has exercised a mighty influence on the history of the Church and of mankind. That day found the disciples a perplexed and timid band; it left them strong and courageous, conscious of their mission, and eager to go forth and win the world for their Risen Lord. Would we realize the completeness of the transformation? Then let us think of Peter quailing at the mockery of a mischievous maid-servant and denying his Lord in abject terror; and then consider the selfsame Peter a couple of months later—the same, yet how different!—facing the Sanhedrin undaunted, and meeting their threats with this sublime defiance: 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' What was it that wrought this amazing transformation?

The Scriptures say it was the power of the Holy Ghost; and what less can it have been?

The Lord's parting injunction to His disciples had been: 'Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high'; and they had tarried at His command. For just a week they waited, expecting 'the Promise of the Father'; and then came the Day of Pentecost. In the morning at the hour of prayer—9 o'clock—they repaired to the Temple and seated themselves in the House of God (v.<sup>2</sup>) among the multitude of worshippers who had come up from far and near to the Holy City to celebrate the Feast of Harvest. There were a hundred and twenty of them; and, though they sat in a group by themselves (v.<sup>1</sup> πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό), there would be nothing to distinguish them from the other worshippers who thronged the Temple, save perhaps their poor attire and dejected aspect.

There sat the great congregation, hushed and reverent, waiting till the hour should strike and

the voice of the priest be heard; when suddenly the stillness was broken by 'a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind,' and the astonished worshippers, raising their heads which had been bowed in silent prayer, and looking about them, saw, as it were, a heavenly light gleaming on the faces of the hundred and twenty. *διαμεριζόμεναι γλώσσαι ὡσεὶ πύρρος* is the phrase, and, as Erasmus says, *Potest geminus intelligi sensus, ut vel accipiamus ipsas linguas fuisse sectiles, vel ut intelligamus eas e cælo delapsas sese in singulos discipulos fuisse dispersitas*. Surely the latter is the true interpretation. It was a light that shimmered from face to face, irradiating first one and then another, like the dawn breaking on peak after peak. The Promise of the Father had been fulfilled; the Risen Lord had baptized His waiting disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire. 'What does this mean?' the spectators would exclaim; and immediately those simple peasants, a moment ago so timid and retiring, burst into eloquence and declared what God had wrought. And, though their hearers were mostly strangers from distant lands, there was no one that did not understand the wondrous story.

Now there are three marvels here: the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, the light that gleamed on the disciples' faces, and that strange power which was given them of reaching the understandings of all those diverse hearers and stirring their emotions. Endless is the diversity of views which have been taken of these marvels, and one may well hesitate to pronounce a dogmatic judgment on a subject which is not only obscure but very sacred, and should be handled with equal diffidence and reverence. There are two errors to be avoided in the treatment of such a theme: on the one hand, the irreverence which would lightly explain difficulties away, and, on the other, the false reverence which clings to traditional misinterpretations and encumbers the sacred text with alien and needless difficulties. It may be that, if we consider this narrative with open eyes and unprejudiced minds, we shall discover that it admits of a simple, natural, and illuminating explanation.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit would, in the first instance, be attended by no outward manifestation, according to that deep saying of our Lord, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.' It would be an inward experience

in the hearts of the disciples. But scarcely had the Heavenly Visitant taken possession of their souls when His power was felt and His presence seen. He illumined their minds, revealing to them the meaning of the Gospel and showing them their high calling as the representatives and ambassadors of their Risen Lord. It was like the illumination of a landscape by a vivid lightning-flash or the sudden opening of a blind man's eyes. All that Jesus had done was clothed with a new and unthought of significance; and words of His which they had forgotten or puzzled over, were remembered and understood. It was the fulfilment of His promise: 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

It was a sudden and overpowering visitation. An exclamation of surprise, a murmur of astonishment, broke from the lips of the hundred and twenty, and there was a rustling as they rose in their places. Amid other surroundings the commotion might have attracted no attention, but in the breathless stillness of the Temple where a pinfall could be heard, the sudden stir seemed a very storm. It was like 'a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the House,' echoing through pillared aisle and vaulted roof.

The great assemblage was startled, and, looking round, they saw the hundred and twenty on their feet as they had started up in sudden surprise, and a strange light gleaming on their faces. What was it? It was a look of wonder and awe, the effulgence of the glory which had flooded their souls, the outward reflection of the holy presence within. What is there here miraculous or incredible? When Moses came down from the Mount after forty days and nights of communion with God, 'the skin of his face shone.' He 'wist not' of it, but the people saw it, and he seemed to them as one transfigured—'apparelled in celestial light.' And is it not written of Stephen that, as he stood before the Sanhedrin, they 'saw his face as it had been the face of an angel'?

What is there incredible or even mysterious in this? The flesh is the spirit's tenement, the face the mirror which reflects its every emotion and passion, the eyes the windows through which it looks. It is no poetic fancy but a familiar fact

that the soul has power to transfigure the flesh and clothe the face with a new aspect. One of the masterpieces of Praxiteles was a statue of Love, and it is said that, if a bandage was bound across its eyes, the face looked plain and sad; but when the bandage was removed, it was transfigured into beauty and a sweet smile played upon it. And what was the secret of the transfiguration? It was the soul within that looked out through the uncurtained windows and glorified the face. How beautiful the plainest countenance appears when the lovelight is on it! What a transfiguration the thought of his Beatrice wrought on Dante. 'When she appeared in any place,' he says in the *Vita Nuova*, 'it seemed to me, by the hope of her excellent salutation, that there was no man mine enemy any longer; and such warmth of charity came upon me that most certainly in that moment I would have pardoned whosoever had done me an injury; and if one should then have questioned me concerning any matter, I could only have said unto him "Love," with a countenance clothed in humbleness. And what time she made ready to salute me, the spirit of Love, destroying all other perceptions, thrust forth the feeble spirits of my eyes, saying, "Do homage unto your mistress," and putting itself in their place to obey: so that he who would, might then have beheld Love, beholding the lids of my eyes shake.'

And what wonder if a like transfiguration be wrought on one whose soul is visited by the Love that excelleth? Have we not seen a man of mean aspect stand up before his fellows to proclaim the Great Salvation, and been offended by his uncouthness? But presently he spoke of Jesus and His Love, and, behold, what a transfiguration! The rude tongue became eloquent, and the plain face shone with a strange light till it seemed like the face of an angel; and, looking over the congregation, one saw the reflection on their faces as though they had caught the glow.

And now what of the sudden eloquence which burst from the lips of the hundred and twenty? Here we have the earliest mention of that *γλωσσολαλία* which prevailed in the primitive Church. The common notion is that it was a supernatural endowment whereby men were enabled by sudden inspiration to speak strange languages. The subject is involved in much obscurity, but a careful perusal of the *locus classicus*, 1 Co 14, may lead us to a somewhat different

conclusion. The apostle there makes two statements which seem pretty decisive. One is that, when a man spoke in a tongue, he spoke not unto men but unto God; no man understood, but in the Spirit he spoke mysteries (v.<sup>2</sup>). The other is that speaking in a tongue was like the music of a harp or a pipe—mere sound without words (v.<sup>7</sup>). Hence it would appear that, when a man spoke in a tongue, he spoke no language whatsoever. Such at any rate was the Corinthian *γλωσσολαλία*. It was a sort of dithyrambic outpouring, the impassioned utterance of a soul in ecstasy. One is tempted, even at the risk of appearing irreverent, to trace this Corinthian *γλωσσολαλία* to an heathen origin, when one remembers that in ancient days insanity was regarded as a divine possession, and that the Pythian priestess was a mad woman, and her frenzied ravings were accepted as inspired oracles. It is no wonder that St. Paul looked askance at the excesses of the Corinthian *glossolalists*, so alien to the sanity of the Gospel.

It was no such frenzy that seized the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Their *γλωσσολαλία* was the eloquence of minds divinely illuminated and inspired with a holy enthusiasm. Their lips were opened, and they spoke as they had never done before—'with other tongues' (v.<sup>4</sup>). It is inconceivable that they should have spoken strange languages, nor indeed is there anything in the narrative, rightly interpreted, which implies that they did. Greek was the universal language in the East at that period, and it would be perfectly understood by all those strangers who had come up to celebrate the Feast at Jerusalem. It is a pity that our versions should have fostered the prevailing error by a palpable mistranslation in v.<sup>8</sup>. The word there translated 'tongue' in A.V. and 'language' in R.V. is *διάλεκτος*, and here is Erasmus's just comment: *Græcis dialectus est lingue proprietates aut species, velut apud Græcos cum una sit lingua, quinque tamen sunt dialecti, ut qui Græce calleat mox possit agnoscere Atticus sit qui loquitur, an Doricus, Ionicus, an Lacedæmonius*. The marvel was not that the disciples spoke a variety of unknown languages. They all spoke Greek, but every stranger heard the peculiar accent with which it was spoken in the remote province where he dwelt. Such is the plain meaning of the words *ἤκουσεν εἰς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν* (v.<sup>6</sup>); and, as though to put the matter beyond the possibility of misunderstanding,

it is added in v.<sup>11</sup>, 'we do hear them speaking *with our tongues* (ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις) the mighty works of God.' It is as though there were an assemblage in London, and, while all the speakers spoke the English language, one spoke it with the accent of Aberdeenshire, another with that of Fifeshire, another with that of Lancashire, and another with that of Dublin; so that strangers from every province of the land were addressed each 'in his own dialect' and 'with his own tongue.'

Now what is the explanation of this marvel? (1) It is more than likely that the hundred and twenty were not all Galilæans. It was natural that the spectators, recognizing the eleven as Galilæans, should leap to the conclusion that their followers were Galilæans likewise and slump them all in the same category (v.<sup>7</sup>). But it is probable that not a few of the hundred and twenty were not Galilæans nor even Palestinians, but strangers who had visited Jerusalem on the occasion of some of the sacred festivals and had there been 'apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Here is one of them who was born in Mesopotamia, and of course he speaks in the Mesopotamian dialect and with the Mesopotamian accent.

(2) Even if they were all Galilæans, it is no wonder that their words should have gone home to their hearers' hearts with a thrill as of their kindly mother-tongue. There is an accent of the

heart as well as of the lips, a dialect of faith as well as of speech, and when the burning eloquence of the disciples kindled the souls of their hearers, it would seem no alien tongue but the voice of brethren. It is told of a godly Highlander who understood not a word of English, that he once visited the Lowlands and went to church in the place where he was staying. On his return home he dilated with much fervour on the sermon he had heard; and when asked how it could be that he had received so much edification from it when it was preached in a strange language, he answered that the name *Christ* had never been out of the preacher's mouth. He had understood that, and it had been as a feast of fat things to his soul. Hearing that, it was as though he were listening to his own mother-tongue. It was with a foreign accent that St. Bernard spoke when he preached the first crusade to the nations of Northern Europe; yet he roused the enthusiasm of multitudes and moved them to forsake home and kindred on that perilous enterprise. When St. Francis Xavier went among the savages of India and the China seas, he knew little or nothing of their barbarous tongues; yet he melted their hearts and won them for Christ. Love has an eloquence of its own, though it have no other speech than looks and tears. And the language of Love is man's mother-tongue the wide world over.

## At the Literary Table.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.<sup>1</sup>

ONE of the last acts recorded of James Russell Lowell by his biographer was to re-read Boswell's *Johnson* for the fourth time. Would he have read his own biography twice? Perhaps he would, for he had ever a healthy interest in the things concerning himself. But will others read it twice?

Yet it is a successful biography. It does all that a biography professes to do, and does it well. It tells us all we need to know of the life of James Russell Lowell, and it never wearies or worries us in the telling. It is just because it is so good a biography, just because it fulfils its proper purpose

<sup>1</sup>*James Russell Lowell: a Biography.* By Horace Elisha Scudder. Macmillan.

so satisfactorily, that it will not be read twice. Having read it once we know the man. We do not need to read it twice. And being a biography and not a work of literary art, it will be read once by everybody, twice by none. If Boswell's *Johnson* had been as good a biography as Scudder's *Lowell*, James Russell Lowell would not have read it for the fourth time. Boswell's *Johnson* is literature, but it is not a biography; Scudder's *Lowell* is not literature, and will not last, but it is nearly as good a biography as it could be.

James Russell Lowell was a prophet. He seemed to be a politician. He was also known as a poet. He had more title to the name of critic. He might